



NEWS RELEASE

Tennessee Regulatory Authority

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Consumer Advisory

Canadian Scam Artist Targets Seniors Citizens With Bogus Lottery/Sweepstakes Prize

Nashville, Tennessee – The Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) is advising consumers to be aware of a possible telephone scam that promises a large cash payoff to those who participate.

According to the U.S. Customs Service, a scam artist, who identifies himself as a Customs officer from the state of Vermont, is placing telephone calls from Canada to the United States and informing potential targets that they have won the Canadian sweepstakes lottery and that their cash prize can be redeemed by paying a transfer or duty fee.

The officer advises the consumers that the fees are to be wired to a Canadian address *before* the sweepstakes prize can be officially claimed.

The scam artist targets American senior citizens, particularly those with large bank account balances and, according to the U.S. Customs Service, seniors who regularly participate in sweepstakes drawings and contests. The prevalence of this new type of scam may be due to the increasing number of states offering lotteries.

The TRA is advising consumers that if someone calls claiming to be from the U.S. Customs Service or any other government agency to inform you that you have won a Canadian lottery or any other lottery that can be claimed by paying a fee or tax, please call the Customs national hotline at 1-800-BEALERT.

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